

2024-2025  
ACADEMIC YEAR

ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK

# CERTIFICATE & DIPLOMA

## CANVAS STITCHES



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall  
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester



Various canvas stitches are chosen to create embroidery that is rich in texture and colour. Canvas work was traditionally worked in tent stitch for hardwearing cushions and chair covers with a border; however combining different textures of thread, a variety of stitches and colour shading can give canvas work a new dimension of depth and movement.

**AIM** - To design, work a piece of Canvas work demonstrating technical assurance and an understanding of stitches, threads, colour, tones and texture that enhances the design. To achieve full coverage of the canvas using a wide variety of stitches and threads (see Stockists below), to emphasize the design with appropriate shading **and in at least one area of gradual transition between two or more similar stitches.** Designs should not be directly copied from other sources; referencing, interpreting or stylising shapes or designs is acceptable however designs should be original you, which your tutor will encourage you to do.

**Please note: All preparatory work (e.g. outlines, drawings, stitch plans, original source material) MUST be handed in for assessment or the work will not be marked.**

### DESIGN

Try to come with some ideas for your design. Your design source should have gradual shading throughout showing depth and perspective. The tutors will be able to make suggestions and help you bring your ideas together to create your own image.

**Do be flexible in your approach, listen to your tutors' experienced advice and be prepared to alter your initial ideas if necessary.**

- **The finished design should be equivalent to A5, 21cm x 15cm (8in x 6in)**
- You may use any design idea of your own - books, photos, magazines and postcards could be your source material.
- Designs with large areas work well for canvas as they offer more scope with selecting and transitioning between stitches and for demonstrating gradual shading though the colour ranges.
- Within at least one area two or more stitches should gradually transition into one another sympathetically (so that there is not an obvious change or join between the stitches).
- It is important to explore a range of texture with canvas work.

**If you are using images from the Internet please be aware of any copyright restrictions and make sure the image is clear and crisp to use.**

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**CANVAS STITCHES**



**STITCHES**

- The Canvas work should contain a good variety of stitches and threads (see Stockists below).
- There should be evidence of shading throughout the stitched areas. The shading should be appropriate and enhance the design.
- Canvas work should include a good variety of stitches: at least two each of diagonal, cross, horizontal and/or vertical stitches appropriate to your design.
- Your design should include some of the following popular stitches listed below but this is not an exhaustive list:

Parisian	Tent	Rice Stitch	Romanian couching
Brick	Cashmere	Velvet/Turkey rug	Oriental
Gobelin	Hungarian	Cross	French knots
Florentine	Leaf/ Fern	Eyelets	Whipped/Woven wheels

Additional embellishment of surface stitches (e.g. French knots, stem stitch, couching) or beads may be used if appropriate to the design.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:** Please see *Project Evaluation* sheet for details

**TIPS**

- Work all stitches with a longer stitch on the back wherever possible, as this gives a better tension.
- Larger stitches worked in the foreground and smaller stitches in the background will help to create a sense of perspective.
- Be careful not to change the perspective of your design by using patterns of an inappropriate scale
- Threads should not be carried across the back of the work, as this would cause unnecessary bulk.
- Short lengths of thread should be used to keep stitching smooth, to stop the threads from wearing out and losing their shine.
- Do not carry dark colours into light areas and vice versa.
- Do not overwork stitches to correct mistakes.
- Use sufficient number of threads in the needle to adequately cover the canvas ground; no canvas thread should show on the front of the completed piece.
- Consider the texture you are aiming to recreate when selecting threads.
- Using more than one colour in the needle is an effective way of shading for this project.
- Stitches should be counted correctly and must be accurately worked (e.g. crossing stitches should cross the same way throughout).
- Check your work carefully when finished, as it is easy to miss stitches!
- Sample stitches on the side of your frame prior to working them on the piece itself. This will help you ensure that the stitch is correctly counted and also that there is enough thread in the needle for the stitch to cover the canvas.



**CANVAS STITCHES**



- Use acid-free tissue paper while you work to keep the background clean at all times.
- When mounting, cut away the excess canvas from the corners. Your tutor will show you this.
- There should be an even amount of canvas rebate around the edge when mounted. The amount of threads will depend on how you intend to frame the work and should be discussed with your tutor.
- Even if you are using a photograph as your main inspiration you must create a drawn version of your design with your intended colours. **This must be handed in with your embroidery for assessment.**
- **Your outline drawing, colour plan and stitch plan must be handed in for assessment, along with your original design source.**

**MATERIALS**

- 18 TPI antique single canvas mounted onto a slate frame
- A variety of threads which may include (see Stockists below):  
Appleton's crewel wool  
Stranded cotton  
Perl e  
Coton a broder  
Knitting yarn  
Metallic threads
- Needles – Tapestry No. 20, 22 and 24
- A waterproof pen only (always test the pen is waterproof before use) should be used to draw on your design, as pencil will rub off onto your threads.

*We stock a wide range of Appleton crewel wool, DMC and Anchor stranded cotton, but to enhance your design you will need to bring any unusual threads, beads or sequins from your own stock.*

**BOOKS**

- Rachel Doyle "The RSN "Essential Stitch Guide – Canvaswork" ISBN 978-1844485871
- Anchor - "Canvaswork Embroidery Stitches" ISBN 978-0715306314
- Mary Rhodes - "Dictionary of Canvas Work Stitches" ISBN 978-0713433012
- Betty Barnden "The Embroidery Stitch Bible" ISBN 978-0785831068
- Jo Ippolito Christensen - "The Needlepoint Book" ISBN 978-147654086
- Owen Davies & Gill Holdsworth - "Embroidered Knot Gardens" ISBN 978-0713489668

**STOCKISTS**

- John Lewis (knitting yarns, other threads)
- Oliver Twists Tel. 0191 416 6016 (space-dyed threads and fabrics)
- Stef Francis (space-dyed threads/fabrics) Tel. 01803 323004  
[www.stef-francis.co.uk](http://www.stef-francis.co.uk)
- JG Threads (space-dyed cotton, rayon & fabrics) Tel. 01202 73525  
[www.jgthreads.com](http://www.jgthreads.com)
- Delicate Stitches/London Bead Company – [www.londonbeadco.com](http://www.londonbeadco.com)
- Creative Quilting - [www.creativequilting.co.uk](http://www.creativequilting.co.uk)
- Sew & So – [www.sewandso.co.uk](http://www.sewandso.co.uk)